

# LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Legislative Audit Committee Members  
**FROM:** Jim Pellegrini, Legislative Auditor, Performance Audits  
**DATE:** March 2006  
**RE:** Audit Follow-up 06SP-025 to Performance Audit on Caseload Management, DPHHS (orig 04P-09)

### **Introduction**

In September 2004, we issued a performance audit of Caseload Management (04P-09) at the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The main audit objectives were to determine what caseload data existed for department programs, how caseloads are used to make resource allocation decisions, and determine internal and external factors that can impact caseloads.

### **Overview**

The audit recommended DPHHS improve how two programs, Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) and Adult Protective Services (APS), manage staff caseloads and workloads. The department is in the process of implementing the audit recommendations. CFSD developed a workload analysis tool to improve data collection and management reports regarding staff caseloads and workloads. CFSD continues to improve baseline data regarding caseloads and developing more detailed management reports. APS developed a data entry system called Operation Protect Montana that includes a caseload/workload management component. This system assists management in better evaluating workload for cases and distributing cases to staff based on this information. Operation Protect Montana provides data that improves management's ability to manage caseworkers, evaluate resource needs for the program, and reallocate staff and other resources to areas of the state where they are most needed. APS continues to develop additional management reports to assist them with caseload management. Further audit work of caseload management is not needed at this time. Additional work could be completed in one to two years after full implementation of the recommendations.

### **Summary of Audit Findings**

Audit work found several department programs had effective methods for managing staff caseload and workload. However, we found the department could improve how the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) and Adult Protective Services (APS) within the Senior and Long Term Care Division manage staff caseload and workload. These programs did not have sufficient policies and procedures related to caseload management, useful data to help program managers manage staff caseload and workload, or on-going assessment of program activities. National standards recommend programs such as CFSD and APS have systems in place to track staff caseload and workload to make informed decisions related to caseload distribution and staffing needs. The audit recommended DPHHS improve management of caseload and workload activities for CFSD and APS. This could be accomplished through developing caseload and

workload policies and procedures, establishing more useful management reports, developing criteria for closing cases, and performing on-going assessment of caseload/workload activities.

### **Department Reports Recommendations are Being Implemented**

The department submitted a letter to the Legislative Audit Division discussing the implementation status of the audit recommendations. According to department officials, the department is in the process of implementing the report recommendations for both CFSD and APS. In January 2005, CFSD began using the National Resource Center to help develop a workload analysis tool to improve data collection and report generation. According to DPHHS officials, this is providing the department with preliminary baseline data and more detailed reports will be developed in Spring 2006.

In July 2005, the Senior and Long Term Care Division implemented a data entry system called Operation Protect Montana (OPM). DPHHS officials said they are pleased with the system's functionality and potential of the system for managing APS caseloads. OPM includes a caseload/workload component and provides management with the ability to assign cases on a more equitable basis. Specifically, managers can review and assign cases based on their complexity. This allows managers to adjust caseloads as needed based on the number of complex (or non-complex) cases assigned to caseworkers. DPHHS officials indicated the system improves their ability to review case activity in different areas of the state, analyze resource needs of the program, and determine if resources are appropriately allocated around the state. Department management said this provides them with the ability to reallocate staff where caseloads dictate the need. In addition, the system provides information of upcoming service needed on cases and if this could potentially impact service needs on other cases. If so, managers can assign staff to cover those services. The Senior and Long Term Care Division continues to develop management reports to assist them in better managing APS caseloads.

Based on DPHHS' letter, we believe DPHHS is making efforts to implement recommendations to improve how CFSD and APS manage caseloads. Additionally, department officials using the data told us the data systems have been a positive change and has improved their ability to manage caseloads. Based on this information, we do not believe further audit work is needed. We have attached a copy of the department's letter discussing implementation status of the audit recommendations for Legislative Audit Committee's review.